244 Macon Street.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Aug 4th

Dear Mr Brewster

I should have written sooner, to thank you for your answer to my letter, but the last two weeks of my stay in Lewis Co. were so closely occupied that I hardly wrote a letter, and not one that was not imperative.

I wish to thank you

O. W. Miller

Aug 4. 1890

bBr 4611.10.1

that it was white — or nearly so, You can judge therefore of the tone. I will take from my note book, notes taken while standing under a tree on which he was, not ten feet from him — Of course I could not see the back, only the sides and under parts White below, closely streaked with delicate lines of a dark color — (I should say gray) and slightly buff or yellowish on the lower belly. It was darker above, but seemed streaked there also. It had one (or two, I cannot be sure) wing bars light upper eyelid or just over eye heartily for the trouble you took to reply to me and also to tell you that we — Miss Merriam and I — found another affair of almost as much interest as that of which I wrote you - the Chestnut sided W- feeding a Redstart baby.

This second affair happened in the same corner of the woods. and it was a male Chestnut (as before) feeding a large bird - a young one of course. You will — as we did — naturally think of a Cowbird. But this one which we saw after for a week, did not have the marks of that bird — aside from the fact that there is no record (according to Miss M.) of that bird being ever found in these woods

The general impression we got of the young bird at first before we saw it closely, was hear of the death of the Canada Jays. I hoped sometime to see them.

I am interested to know what you think about the nests Dr Merriam sent you (found by Mrs M—) and Mrs Merriam has promised to repeat your opinion to me. We had a delightful two months study together — crowned — for me — by a wonderful feast of Hermit Thrush *song*, and an acquaintance with the young Redheaded woodpecker, for which I had hoped.

Thanking you again — I am
Very truly yours Olive Thorne Miller

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4 Aug 90

2

a white chin, an *emarginate tail*. White or very light beak (finch shaped) and fat

I saw the Chestnut S. feed it several times. It was certainly twice as long as the Chestnut — and several times larger. The foster-parent looked like a "midget" standing beside his adopted infant.

There was not a suggestion of the brown of the Cow-bird *about* it, and the shape of the tail is different, as well as the color of bill and feet. The two came up near the house where I was, and I saw them well — from below. The young one did not hop but scrambled about on the branches. and flew very well —

Dr Merriam suggested in reply to his sister's account, that it might be a young Rose breasted Grosbeak, — it did not look to me so ungainly as that youngster which I saw last summer on Greylock

I do not like this to have you trouble yourself to identify — or even to think about it, but as a curious fact in the character of the Chestnut Sided W. I wish I could know whether the one bird was the hero of both occasions. I believe myself that he was

I'm exceedingly sorry to

O. W. Miller.
Jany. 30. 1891

244 Macon Street.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Jan 30th

Dear Mr Brewster

I've been wanting to write to you ever since your "Robin Roosts" came out in the Auk, to tell you how much I liked it, but I have waited – hoping for chance to "do the subject justice" — but chance — alas! — is an unknown state in the neighborhood of New York. – at least

thank you for it — although I haven't time to say more

Sincerely yours
Olive Thorne Miller

I am not able to command any, so when this last paper of yours appeared — on the Gallinules — I decided I could not wait for what I shall probably not get until I shake the dust off my feet next May, but must tell you how pleased I was, to know the solution of the mystery Dr Faxon's story interested me in, last summer (I hope you're not a grammarian expert, to be shocked at that sentence, which is as breathless as my life just now!) Such a paper as yours, interesting one in the life of the bird, and showing some humanity toward the poor persecuted creatures — is such a delight in the page after page of murder and robbery we have to encounter in that magazine — at least that's the way it strikes me, and I feel that I must

Olive Thorne Miller.
Nov. 7-1892

244 Macon Street.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Nov 7th

Dear Mr Brewster:

Yours was received yesterday, just as I was starting for a day in New York, and I answer at my first moments leisure.

First then: how could I be "offended" at your taking me at my word and answering me with

anything of real value like a Mss. I should send by Express.

I regret very much that I cannot help you in the matter, but really I am at present declining and shirking anything I can, in order to give my whole strength to my "Talks" and to start for the West before May first.

Sincerely yours

Olive Thorne Miller

perfect frankness? I should indeed be offended if you had not done so.

I dare say the difficulty you see in my daughter's doing the work to suit you, may exist. I judged from your saying that "there would not be much writing required" – that it was merely arranging your own material, and connecting it by a thread – so to speak, and that I was sure she could do. I expected of course to aid her with my own suggestions. In regard to the Post Office service, I found the Colorado Springs office very badly managed, but have heard no complaints elsewhere. I send any thing important by registered mail, and have had no trouble in reaching Aspen, where she is. But

Olive T. Miller Aug. 7-1893

244 Macon St
Brooklyn Aug 7th

Mr Brewster:

I have just returned from the West, where I have been since the first of May, and reading over papers accumulated during my absence, I came upon the July Auk. Naturally I turned at once to your article on the Flickers nest, and was greatly interested by it.

But you know how *pleasing* it is to find a mistake in the work of one who knows

in Utah, I was interested to see that the mother came to the nest with a loud, *squealing* sort of cry — not at all like any Flicker I ever saw before

I left Miss Merriam and my daughter in Utah, where both are doing well, and spent July in Colorado — I did not like Utah for study — or for any thing else either.

Hoping you will not grudge me the comfort I find in the fact that even you can be mistaken

I am very truly
yours
Olive Thorne Miller

much more than ourself — and this pleasure is mine, though sadly marred by the fact — which is thus revealed — that you have not read my article on the Flicker.

I forgive you however (!) partly because you did not kill one of those babies to see what it had to eat, — and partly because I really don't know that you are under obligation to read what I write anyway.

The mistake was in thinking that the Flicker's manner of feeding by regurgitation had not been reported. I reported it in 1890 in the Atlantic Monthly, and in 1892 in "Little Brothers of the Air" where it may be found on page 39.

Flickers are birds of great individuality of character, I am much interested in them, and this summer, when I had opportunity to see a Red-shafted Flicker nest

Olive T. Miller.
Aug. 14-1893

244 Macon St
Brooklyn Aug 14th

Dear Mr Brewster:

I did not dream of such a thing as your correcting that little error of yours in any public way as you speak in your letter of doing. Do not think of such a thing! It is entirely unnecessary. I wanted you to know that I too had noticed it, but I do not care in the least whether the world at large knows it, and to harm you in any sense 'and tumble pit' will be as gratifying [illegible]

I am surprised to hear you say that you do not like Colorado. I am very fond of it — the wonderful invigorating air, the marvelous blue sky, the beautiful 'parks' and the grand "procession of flowers" — not to mention the mountain range that glorifies the region of Colorado Springs, are one and all more dear to me. With that State I associate the western meadow lark — though of course he is not confined to its limits. It even seemed to me that this bird did not sing so well in Utah as in Colorado.

Miss Merriam — whom, with my daughter, I left in Utah, riding horseback and bathing in Salt Lake, finds the climate very favorable, and is improving in health every day. Thus to eny (at least) on his trail!

Very truly yours

Olive Thorne Miller

Olive Thorne Miller.
Dec. 15 - 1894.

628 Hancock Street,
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dear Mr Brewster,

I do not suppose you want this proof returned, yet I "err on the safe side" by returning it.

I am sorry you do not add more to the book. You will certainly add very greatly

& its usefulness if you
review the index. As it
is, it needs "a Philadelphia
Lawyer" as the saying is, to
to understand the mysteries
of it. Or — more truly — it
requires a little study
which I never have time
to give, to understand its
construction.

Thanking you for
your trouble,

I am very sincerely yours
Olive Thorne Miller

Jan 15th

P.S. I assume you have seen
John Muir's charming study of
the bewitching Water Ouzel, now
published in his new book. "The
Mountains of California."

O.T.M.

in haste
Sincerely yours
Olive Thorne Miller

July 6th

Seal Harbor
Mt. Desert. Maine

Dear Mr Brewster:
Since I wrote you this morning — or was it yesterday — I have seen one of the Thrushes, whom I know to be the same species by its notes, who *had* buffy cheeks. So I suppose I must conclude that this color is lacking

in some manners, and pleasant in others.
and that my Thrush is the Olive back —
what I?
There's another point — do you know the
nest of the Olive-back? — A bird-student
here who saw one of these Thrush families,
found the nest, has taken it, and tells me
it is very shallow; like a saucer. It was
in a low tree. The Thrushes it has seen in
it. I have not examined it, but shall in
a day or two. The Hermit and Veery nests
that I have seen have been very deep like
a cup. I hope I'm not bothering you

No — C. T.
Jany 18th [illegible]

Seal Harbor
Mt Desert, Me
Aug 3. [illegible]

Dear Mr Brewster:

Thanks for this last letter which sets my mind at rest about the Parula. I wish I could show you the nest, but it is in the extreme top of a Spruce tree and I can't bear to cut off a twig. I am trying to think of some way to get it home as it is. If it were not so bulky I would send it to you to examine. The young ones that came from this nest, have the buff — so there is no doubt about its identity.

I don't know where Trumpet Island is — I hope those fiends did not come from there — yet I don't know that it makes any difference where they come from — Such tales make me discouraged not only on account of the poor birds — but on account of the human race — Alas how much humane education is needed!

I thank you very much for the trouble you have taken to identify my [illegible]

Sincerely yours Olive Thorne Miller

Locust Grove
Lewis Co. N.Y.
July 7th

Dear Mr Burroughs

I am anxious to know something that I cannot find out from books, and I take the liberty of writing you, hoping that you will not think it too much trouble to tell me. — It is this: Is it true that low-nesting birds, as the Veery, Cuckoo, Bobolink and others, get their young out of the nest in six or

saw a redstart nest (very common here) at an unusual height, 25 feet I should judge. We saw the male and female both, feeding the young. The next day Miss Merriam found, and called me to see, a male chestnut sided warbler insisting on feeding the young, who was up on the edge — or at least in plain sight — The male Redstart was not seen during several hours that we watched very closely, nor at all afterwards but the female, very worn and ragged looking eight days from the time of hatching

We — (Miss Florence Merriam and myself) have watched two veery nests one black billed cuckoo, and one bobolink, and in no case were the young in the nest more than eight days I think — I am sure of the veery, and the cuckoo. The former were all gone the seventh day after we saw the eggs unhatched — and the latter in six days after we saw one newly hatched bird and one egg.

I thought they must have been disturbed, although no collectors or gunners are allowed in these private grounds. But there is such a coincidence in the time of all, that I thought it might perhaps be their custom. If you can tell me I shall be very glad

We have watched what we consider — perhaps in our ignorance of bird customs — a very curious affair — I should like to know what you think of it. One day we

Miller — O.T./July 7

trouble you so much to answer —

I am very truly yours

Olive Thorne Miller

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was doing her best to feed, and to drive away the Chestnut. She however persisted, came as often as she did with food, and gave it to the youngster every time he was not driven away. We watched it till three or four o'clock, and then went out again at half-past six in the evening, finding the same thing going on. In the morning the scene was unchanged, except that the little one was out on a branch near the nest - we saw it fly, we caught it when it came to the ground, and identified it as a Redstart. The mother cared for it after that and though the Chestnut came around, he would not - apparently - find it, for he often waited with food till the mother came, and then followed her, when of course she drew him away. He was discouraged on that day and abandoned the attempt

Is not this a rather unusual affair? There is no mistake about the birds. We were not more than twenty feet from them, and identified them perfectly

any times.

I have thought many times of the "Camp Birds" you told me you had "thought" of sending to me. I hope they are well, and that you will write their story, for the benefit of the rest of the world

Hoping this will not

was so loud and sudden;
Yet again the two "pit"
you give as Swainson's –
describes this bird's "grit."
A friend here, a lady who
knows something of birds,
saw a family of nestlings
take flight, and had one in
her hands. She says the
young one had buff on it,
but she failed to discover it
in the elders.
I have the nest, perhaps
that will help in identi-
fication, for it is most peculiar.
It is near the top of a young
Spruce perhaps six feet high.

Seal Harbor
Mt Desert. Me

Dear Mr Brewster:

I am so
sorry I did not know
you were near here!
I should have begged
you to come over to see
the thrush and the
unknown warbler for
generally.

Thank you for your
letter – I know descriptions
of bird notes are no guide
at all. excepting when one

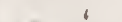
is very familiar with a bird, they recall them
here as to the weather. I do know the black &
yellow well. it is one of the most common birds
here, I have seen it often and seen the young
birds. It does not seem to me possible that I
could look [illegible] on that bird, and fail to see
that yellow rump, or those big white patches on
the wings. I admit the description reads like
that of the [illegible], and of course it may be that
"my eyes were blinded" — but I can hardly
credit it.

In regard to the Thrush. I believe I wrote you
after the first letter, that I saw another bird who
black strip on the side of the head. What you give
as the call of Bicknells — the night-hawks cry, and
one of the Red-winged blackbirds, is a good description
of this birds call (one of them) that I called a Shriek. it

July, and so did not find them mating.

I have been greatly interested in White-throat Sparrow song, and have noted down no less than nineteen variations of their two notes, and I have caught one bird singing two different songs.

Now the warblers seem to be gone or going. I have not heard one where there were plenty, in two days. The Thrush too has nearly ceased singing, and I shall not stay long — of

It is perhaps 2½ inches in inside diameter on the bottom, ~~and~~ with an ~~edge~~ or rim slightly flaring, about one inch high. You understand, the nest is not a rounded cup, but a flat dish, with a rim  like that, the bottom is perfectly flat. The angle is sharp and perfectly defined, and the whole inside is hard and apparently solid as a piece of [illegible]d — entirely unlike any nest I ever saw

It seems to be made outside of grass or some such stuff, and lined with black or very dark rootlets (I judge) with bits of something which looks like decayed wood, but all firmly pressed together as if cemented. The rim at the side next the tree trunk is whole, and an inch high — but in front it looks as if it had been broken a little at the edge and is somewhat lower. How do you know such a nest as *that*? Out of it came five little birds with buffy faces. So I suppose they *must* have been Olive backs. The song of *those* birds was peculiar too — as I said in the veery tone, but with remarkable inflections that made it sound like conversation — questions asked — assertions made — with pauses for reply. I shall certainly give another summer to the study of this bird. I did not get here unfortunately till

It is not necessary to trouble yourself to answer this, but if you should wish to do so, you better address me at home, for I may not be here, and letters are always forwarded promptly.

Sincerely yours
Olive Thorne Miller

Aug 25th

628 Hancock St
Brooklyn
N.Y.

Miller – O. T.

July 25/2.

244 Macon Street.
Brooklyn, N.Y. Feb 24th

Dear Mr Brewster:

I am glad to know, by your letter, that Miss Robinson's birds were what I suggested, and that her anxiety is at an end. I have many letters of the sort, and usually the description is so poor that it is impossible to identify—even would be, I think, if I were made some provision

---

He has been telling me of your vast collection of notes on the habits of birds, and I was very anxious — as I am still — that anything you write should be published. Partly because of this desire, and partly because at that time I had not so much work as I could do, I told him I should like to help in getting that matter into shape. And I have not changed my feeling in the least, I should like very much to do it, and I should greatly like to do what you mention in your letter. But since that time my work has increased so much that I am driven all the time, and this Spring have had to refuse several

them I am, much more
timid. Then I knew I
knew well but I did not
[illegible] acquaintance with
[illegible] here.

Thanks for your answer
to my question about a
place for bird study,
Santa Cruz — which you
speak of, is too far south
for me. I admire Southern
Cal., [illegible] so good. but
besides (Southern) being too warm for me,
I cannot endure that. I

wrote to Mr Bryant about
the vicinity of San Francisco.
and since I wrote you I have
his reply. He says the "small boy"
is rampant, and few nests
escape them, and is on the
whole not encouraging.
Miss Merriam — whom I expect to
take with me — has talked with
some of the fraternity in Washington
and Capt. Bendire says many
tempting things about Dakota.
I am therefore investigating
Dakota and Utah.

I remember very well
my conversation with Mr
[illegible], in regard to doing
some "hack work" for you.

judgment, and is interested in birds. Moreover, she has a great desire to be independent and is [illegible] strong enough to teach school, for which she has been fitted. Now, if you would be willing to let her try her hand, with the understanding that if the result did not please you you should not pay for it. I think she would like to do so. She is a young woman (33 years old) of brains (and I say it without fraternal prejudice) and has gifts that will make her a writer some day, as I believe.

244 Macon Street.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

requests for articles because I could not find time to write them.

I don't know whether I have told you that I contemplate doing some new sort of work: giving 'Bird Talks' both in Schools and to Classes of Mothers and [illegible], for the purpose of interesting youth in the living as opposed to the dead bird, and by way of the mothers to start the interest as near the cradle as I can get. I am very much interested in the work, and to get it started is what I am now

working at. In the meantime
I write nine (9) papers about
our home birds, for the Children.
I shall talk the same facts.
I have collected mounted
specimens of the principal
birds, with which to illustrate
the talks. There will be ten
talks, one of which will be
a "field day" to show them
how to observe and identify
birds, without a gun.
I mean to begin with the
Schools (the best private
schools) in the Fall, but
desire first to try my hand
with the "grown-ups". So I
am now writing the papers
which I shall begin to deliver
about Mar 10th. and that
will only let me get along
about Aug 1st.

I give you the whole plan,
because I am sure the work
will interest you, and because
also, you will see for yourself
why I cannot undertake
another thing, such as I should
like to do so.

The thought has just struck
me, that my daughter might
possibly do what you wish,
if it can be ~~done~~ arranged by
correspondence. She is in
Colorado, has good literary

In some time I will write her
at once, and if she feels equal
to the undertaking, and it is
a suggestion you care to consider,
it may be arranged. If for any
reason you prefer not to try
her work, you have only to say
so frankly, and nobody
will be hurt. I beg that you
will be entirely frank in the
matter — I have none

Very truly yours
Hiram Thomas Miller

Olive T. Miller.

Feby. 24 –

from the tops of trees and fills the woods. It has none of the repose of Hermit or Wood Thrush It is rather rapid, spirited and with great variety.

Words of course do not express bird song, but they sometimes recall it to one who is familiar with it, and I will give some of the clauses as they came to my ear.

"rick-er-rick-er-ree-er-ree-er"

"er-rick-er" or "er-ree-tee

(snapped out with great" vim")

When he sees me he comes about with an anxious "quit" repeating it any moment. If a cat or dog appears he adds to it a strange explosive sound, almost a squawk - as "quit-ah!" and this he adds any time so long as the beast is about. This may be what

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[n.d.]

Seal Harbor
Mt Desert, Maine

Dear Mr Brewster:

I want your help - if you can give it, to identify two birds.

In the first place a warbler. I saw it from a window 12 or 15 feet from the ground. It came to the ground and scrambled about a few seconds. My first impression was of a large patch of blue-gray (white-breasted nuthatch color) enclosed in black, and looking closely I saw that the whole top of the head was blue-gray (see Chapman's color chart) enclosed on the sides by a wide black stripe, and at the back by very dark brown, perhaps what Chapman calls "fuscous" (darker if anything) which extended over the whole back, and perhaps wings (not sure about that) The bird flew to a branch and I saw ~~that~~ the breast was rich yellow with many black streaks on the sides. I could not see the middle of the breast. The only warbler whose description comes near this in Coues or Chapman is Kirtlands. Can you suggest any other that it might be?

The other bird is a Thrush, I suppose — according to the books — it should be the Olive back, but I have several times seen the bird at a distance of fifteen feet, with a good glass and have been unable to see the least buffy look to his cheeks, on the contrary they look more gray. Chapman's quotation of your account of the song of Bicknells (Chapman p 398) made me think that might be my bird, and as you are familiar with his notes you might possibly be able to tell me, from what I can write of my birds notes (which are very decided and peculiar) whether it is Olive Back or Bicknells. To begin with every note has the peculiar tremulous quality of the veery, they might all be made by him. The song is loud, given

Miller - O.T.

~~Miller O.T.~~

[n.d.]

you say is like the Nighthawk,

Now the notes of our Thrushes are so different, that I hoped — if you are familiar with them — that you might be able to judge from this very inadequate description which bird they most nearly described, Bicknell's, or the Olive backed.

I am having a good study of White Throat Sparrow song here. Such a variety in these simple notes I never guessed. One under my window sings minor, and adds the triplets any of two enough to proclaim his relationships to the White Throats. He is very careful to keep out of sight.

I'm sorry to trouble you about my identifications but that's the penalty - you know - one suffers from knowing more than other people

Sincerely yours

Olive Thorne Miller

(Care Mrs John Smallidge)